IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Canceled):

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): An information processing apparatus ~~according to~~ ~~claim 1,~~ connected to a server along with other information processing apparatuses through a network and which is supplied with a shared virtual space, said information processing apparatus comprising:

an inputting unit configured to allow a user to input strings of characters constituting a chat carried on via an avatar which is active in said shared virtual space as an incarnation of said user;

a transmitting unit configured to transmit said strings of characters input through said inputting means to said server as character data;

a converting means for converting said character data coming from said server into audio data ~~wherein said converting means includes~~ including a correspondence table storing means for storing a correspondence table in which character data are made to correspond with audio data; and a processing means for referencing said correspondence table storing means so as to convert character data transmitted from said server into the corresponding audio data , and

an output configured to audibly output said audio data converted by said converting means.

Claim 3 (Original): An information processing apparatus according to claim 2, further comprising correspondence table updating means which, in response to a query from said server, transmits to said server an ID representing a type of said correspondence table stored in said correspondence table storing means, wherein, if said server returns an updated correspondence table in response to said ID transmitted thereto, then said correspondence table updating means stores said updated correspondence table into said correspondence table storing means.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): An information processing method for use with an information processing apparatus which is connected to a server along with other information processing apparatuses through a network and which is connected to a server along with other

information processing apparatuses through a network and which is supplied with a shared virtual space, said information processing method comprising the steps of:

allowing a <u>first</u> user to input strings of characters constituting a chat carried on via an avatar which is active in said shared virtual space as an incarnation of <u>the first</u> ~~said~~ user;

<u>storing audio data and strings of characters in a correspondence table such that the audio data is made to correspond to the strings of characters;</u>

transmitting said strings of characters input in said inputting step to said server as character data;

<u>receiving strings of characters from the server sent by a second user;</u>

<u>searching whether the correspondence table contains any audio data corresponding to said strings of characters received;</u>

converting said character data coming from said server into audio data; and

audibly outputting said audio data converted in said converting step <u>as a voice of the avatar representing the second user</u>.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): A storage medium which stores a computer-readable program for use by an information processing apparatus which is connected to a server along with other information processing apparatuses through a network and which is supplied with a shared virtual space, the program comprising the steps of:

allowing a <u>first</u> user to input strings of characters constituting a chat carried on via an avatar which is active in said shared virtual space as an incarnation of said user;

<u>storing audio data and strings of characters in a correspondence table such that the audio data is made to correspond to the strings of characters;</u>

transmitting said strings of characters input in said inputting step to said server as character data;

<u>receiving strings of characters from the server sent by a second user;</u>

<u>searching whether the correspondence table contains any audio data corresponding to said strings of characters received;</u>

converting said character data coming from said server into audio data; and

audibly outputting said audio data converted in said converting step <u>as a voice of the avatar representing the second user</u>.

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